

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Background to the study

The specific purposes of this study are:

- to investigate an ongoing existence of transformation in the work environment of the education managers with respect to building relationships among all the participants in the institution;
- creating a safe and supportive environment to suit the needs of the school;
- to implement the core recommendations of the South African Schools Act of 1996 as well as The Employment Equity Act of 1998 in the work place;
- to determine the level of staff development designed to influence professional growth;
- to create ways of empowering both the educator and the parents by focusing on processes that will encourage coherent decision making in schools.

5.2 NATURE AND SOURCES OF THE POPULATION

5.2.1 The target population

The target population in this research is the secondary school education managers in the Gauteng Province, irrespective of sex, religion or race. The researcher reckons that the population is experimentally accessible and that a reasonable sample can be drawn from the population. The research is confined to Gauteng Province. There are four hundred and forty eight (448) secondary schools in the area. The researcher regarded it as a reasonable satisfactory population.

5.2.2 The research method

There are basically two types of sampling designs, viz.

- A. simple random sampling
- B. systematic random sampling.

According to Babbie (1992:212), the simple random sampling “is not usually the most efficient method, and it can be laborious if done manually”. The researcher has opted for the *systematic sampling*, because, in comparison, the latter “is slightly more accurate than simple random sampling” (Babbie, 1992:213).

To eliminate the human bias in the systematic method, the first element was selected at random, thereafter, every third school was selected (sampling interval). This was done after special and intermediate schools were eliminated from the list of schools that were arranged in strict alphabetical order. The particular order of the schools did not bias the sample to be selected.

5.2.3 Tools for research

Various tools can be used for collecting data, they include:

- A. questionnaires
- B. interviews
 - 1) face-to-face
 - 2) telephonic
- C. examining reports.

For the purposes of this research, the questionnaire is regarded as the most suitable way of “determining the extent to which respondents hold a particular attitude or perspective” (Babbie, 1992:147). The major purpose of using a questionnaire is that, if properly prepared, it can offer a reliably consistent presentation of items. The other advantages of using a questionnaire are:

- they can be mailed or given to a large number of people at the same time;
- it is less time-consuming than interviews;
- more people can be reached easily, thus obtaining a broader spectrum of views;
- standard instructions are given to all the respondents and the appearance, mood or conduct of the researcher does not influence the results;
- on controversial issues, it is easier to elicit a response via a questionnaire than an interview;
- the administration, scoring and analysis of a structured questionnaire are relatively easy and, if conducted properly, the results are reliable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990:100).

The abovementioned advantages have prompted the researcher to select a questionnaire to conduct the research study, as opposed to other methods.

5.3 HOW THE RESEARCH FAIRED

One hundred and forty seven (147) questionnaires were posted, of which 38,8% responded.

Hereunder follows a summary of how the research fared:

Number of questionnaires	:	147
Number posted	:	147
Number received	:	57
Percentage	:	38,8%
Unreturned questionnaires	:	90

From a statistical point of view the percentage of returned questionnaires is unacceptably low. Therefore the researcher will not make generalisations of all schools in the Gauteng Province, but will make it only applicable to those schools involved in the research project.

5.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE FORMULATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was subdivided into seven sections.

5.4.1 Section A. Demographic information

In this section, the questionnaire was designed to accumulate information about the respondent's location, the size of the school, the school establishment, as well as the average number of learners per class.

5.4.2 Section B. Classroom management

This section of the questionnaire was aimed at determining whether the education manager forms an integral part of the goings-on in the school. The researcher has to determine whether the education manager plays a supportive role in the classroom activities by:

- seeing to order and discipline in the classroom, together with the educators. This is critical to the culture of learning and teaching as well as maintaining discipline in the school;
- doing class visits in order to get first hand information about the successes and the imminent problems encountered by the educators on the ground;
- ensuring that the safety and security of the educators and the learners in the school entrusted on him, is maintained.

5.4.3 Section C. Transformation

The purpose of this section was to indicate to the education manager what the key areas of transforming the schools are, as well as determine his/her capacity to transform and manage the school to the desired effect.

In this section, basic information about Curriculum 2005, including the attitudes of the education managers towards the implementation of such changes, had to be determined.

5.4.4 Section D. Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

A general knowledge of the Act was established with regard to proportions of the inclusion of women as opposed to men in the School Management Teams (SMT), as well as the appointment of educators across the colour line in a particular school. It was also of essence to find out whether affirmative action in the work environment was applicable. The practice of discriminatory attitudes towards HIV infected people in the employment of educators and the admission of the learners are to be clarified in the HIV policy drawn by the schools. The same should apply to people who are physically challenged (disabled).

5.4.5 Section E. Staff development

The role played by education managers in the motivation and encouragement of the educators to develop themselves cannot be underestimated. Ideally, there is room for improvement in as far as the working conditions of the educators are concerned. Programmes relating to staff development should be embedded in the whole school programme in order to provide the best possible work environment for the pupils to learn.

5.4.6 Section F. Empowerment of staff and parents (SGB)

Both the educators and the School Governing Body members, as well as the general members of the community having the interest of the school at heart, must be empowered. It is not unexpected that ordinary citizens may be prepared to render essential services to the school. The abovementioned saying is supported by the following utterances:

“Leaders who wish to empower others should be good listeners, that they need to understand the social structure of the organisation, and that, above all else, they must understand the workers’ sentiments” (Hoyle, English & Steffy, 1998:4).

5.4.7 Section G. Management of resources

Policies must be put in place so that the schools could manage their resources effectively. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 stipulates that the parents of the learners in a particular school be liable to pay fees and have the knowledge of appealing to the Head of the Department in the Province for the exemption thereof. It is the duty of the education manager to disseminate such information to all stakeholders.

5.5 PROBLEMS AND SHORTCOMINGS EXPERIENCED WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire attempted to cover a wide range of aspects related to transformation in the management of secondary schools. However, the researcher had to be cautious of a long questionnaire that would be time-consuming and thus discourage response.

A low percentage of responses from the education managers could be ascribed to the following:

- attitudes of some school managers to transform and thus restructure their schools;
- lack of time to respond to the questionnaires;
- the timing might not have been appropriate;
- inclusion of the following condition from the Gauteng Provincial Government's letter of approval to the researcher:

“Persons who offer their co-operation will receive no special benefit from the Department, while those who prefer not to participate will not be penalised in any way.”

Reminders were posted to the schools in the sample, which improved the responses somewhat.

Learners, educators and education managers must be encouraged to participate in research by way of responding to questionnaires. Their engagement in any form of empirical research will demonstrate the manner in which social inquiries will yield quality responses that will improve the general quality of life.

5.6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The Department of Statistics and the Research Unit of the University of Pretoria were of assistance in the compilation of the following statistics:

Table 5.1: School's location

	f	%
Urban (city)	28	50,0
Urban (township)	24	42,9
Semi-urban	4	7,1

According to the data contained in table 5.1, the following deductions can be made:

- (a) There are on average more learners in the urban (city) schools than in the urban (township) schools.
- (b) The township learners are fewer than those in the city schools.
 The influx of learners from the townships to the cities can be attributable to:
 - the scrapping of the Group Areas Act, resulting in more non-whites relocating from the townships to settle in the cities.
- (c) There is a remarkably low percentage of semi-urban schools (i.e. 7,1%).

Diagram 5.1: School's location

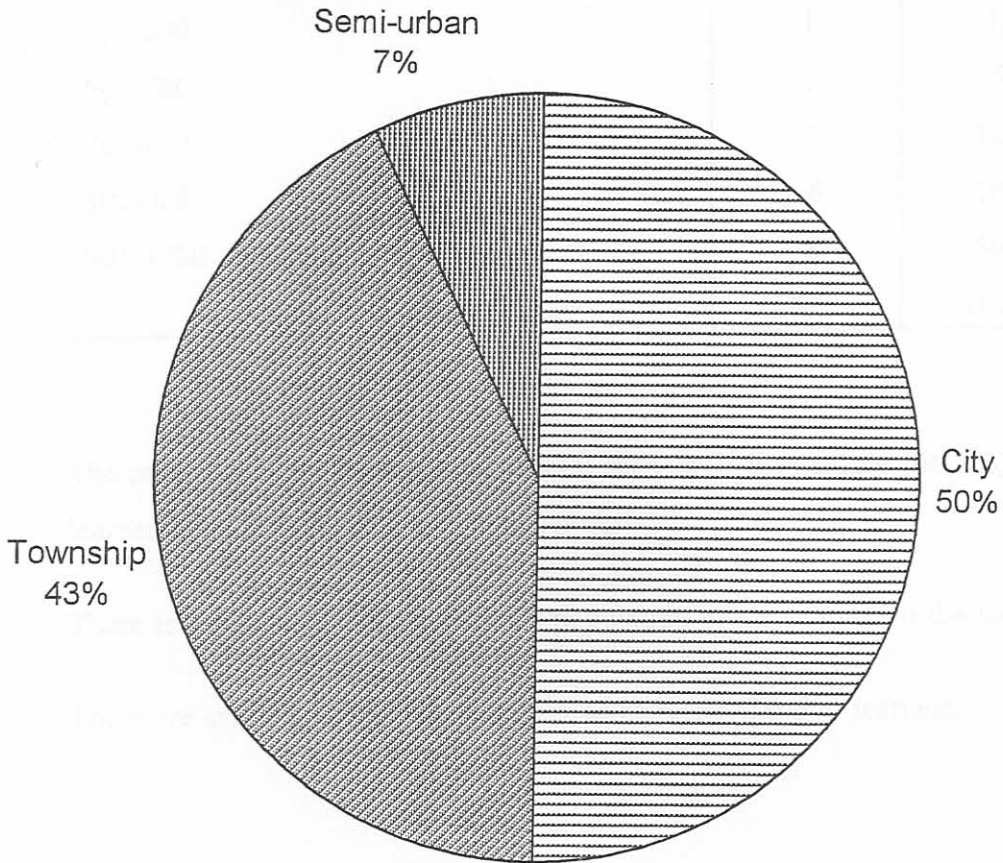


Table 5.2: Size of the school

	f	%
400-500	2	3,5
501-600	1	1,8
601-700	3	5,3
701-800	7	12,3
801-900	6	10,5
901-1000 and over	38	66,7
Total	57	100%

- A. The majority of the Gauteng secondary schools in the sample (66,7%) have a learner-population of 901-1 000 and over.
- B. There is a fluctuation of the learner-population in the schools in the sample.
- C. There are schools with a low turnover of between 400-500 learners.

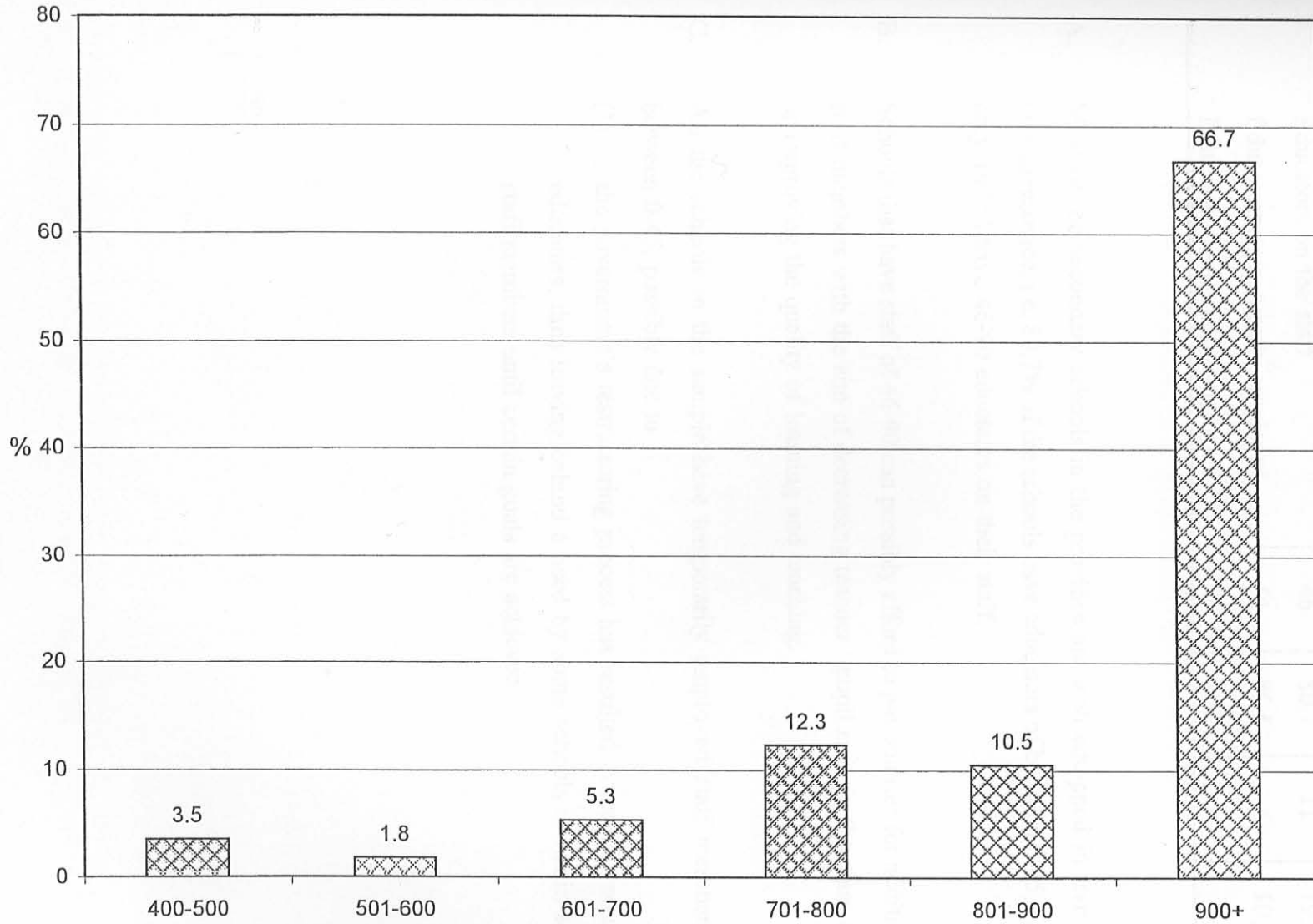


Diagram 5.2: Size of the school

Table 5.3: Staff establishment

	f 0-45	%	f 46-90	%
Educators on the staff	46	80,7	11	19,3
Educators permanently employed	51	89,5	6	10,5
Educators temporarily employed	56	100	–	–

- A. Most of the secondary schools in the province are well equipped in terms of human resource, i.e. 80,7% of the schools have educators of between 0-45, while only 19,3% have 46-90 educators on their staff.
- B. Schools that have staff of 46-90 can possibly afford to pay salaries for additional staff members with the aim of decreasing teacher : pupil ratio in the classroom or improving the quality of learning and teaching.
- C. All the schools in the sample have temporarily employed staff members of between 0-45, possibly due to
- (1) the government's restructuring process has resulted in redeployment of educators, thus leaving behind a need by some schools to retain some staff members until certain goals are achieved.

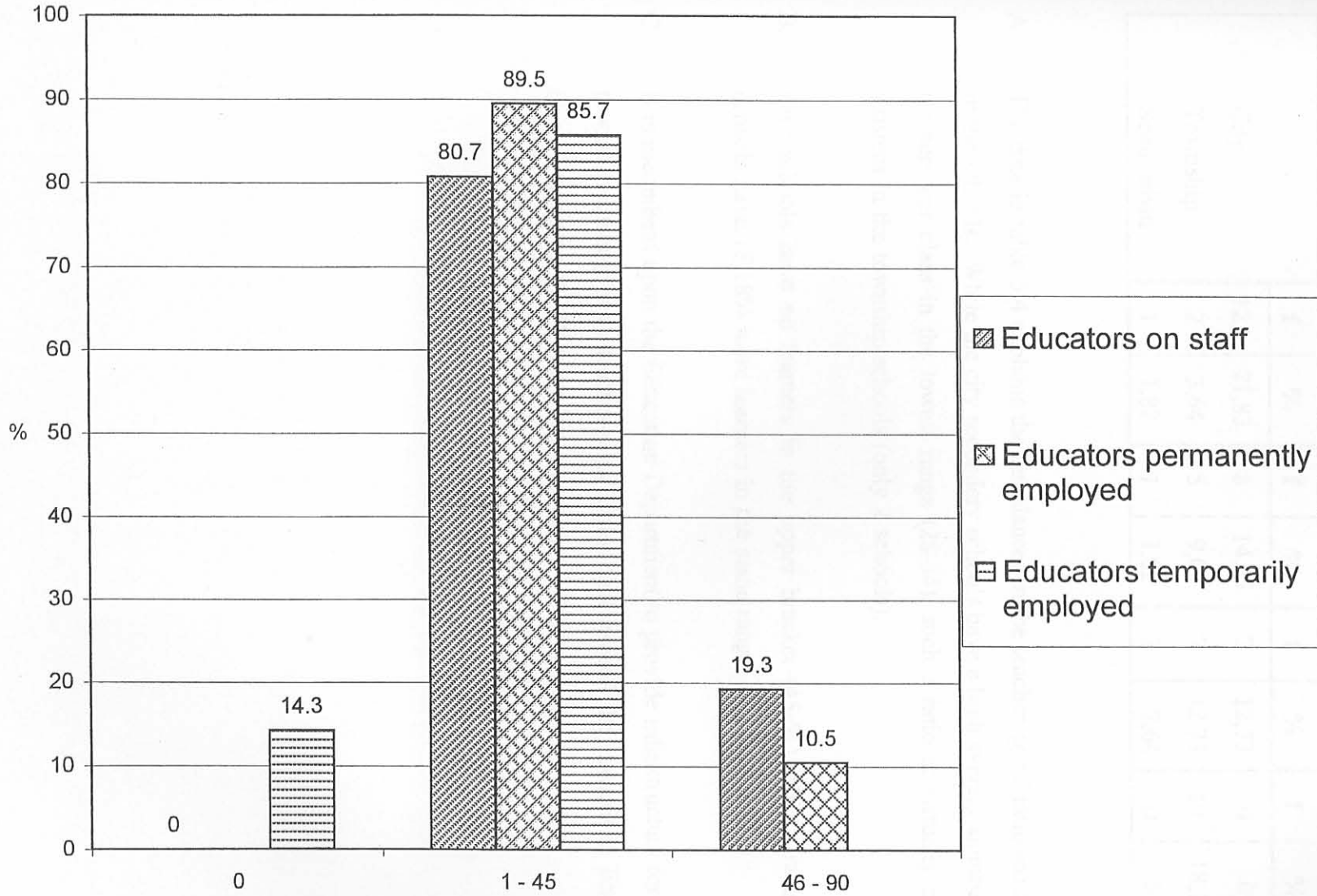


Diagram 5.3: Staff establishment

Table 5.4: The average number of learners per class

	28 - 34		35 - 39		40 - 44		45 - 51	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
City	12	21,83	8	14,55	7	12,73	0	0
Township	2	3,64	5	9,09	7	12,73	10	18,18
Semi-urban	1	1,82	1	1,82	2	3,64	0	0

- A. The data in table 5.4 explains the imbalances of the teacher-pupil ratio existing in the schools. While the city secondary schools have a high average number of learners per class in the lowest range (28-34), such a ratio is virtually non-existent in the township schools (only 2 schools).
- B. City schools have no learners in the upper bracket (45-51) while township schools have 18,18% more learners in the same range.
- C. It is incumbent upon the Education Department to provide infrastructure for the township schools with teacher-pupil ratios that exceed the prescribed limits. (1 : 40 primary; 1 : 35 secondary schools)

Table 5.5: Deputy principals in the schools

	f	%
1 Deputy principal per school	23	40,4
2 Deputy principals per school	32	56,1
No deputy principal per school	2	3,5

- A. Most secondary schools in the sample still have to employ the second deputy principal (40,4% have only one deputy principal).
- B. Of the schools in the sample, 56,1% have two Deputy Principals.
- C. Schools that do not have deputy principals at all (3,5%), may have the head of department doubling their functions to cover for the unoccupied posts of deputy principals.
- D. The above situation is unhealthy for the schools that do not have any deputy principals. Teaching and learning can be distracted by such eventualities.
- E. The advantage of having two deputy principals is in the distribution of work. One deputy principal can play an administrative role while the other one's function can be instructional. However, there are no watertight compartments in as far as their duties are concerned.

SECTION B. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Table 5.6: Student leadership and how they are elected

	f	%
Prefects	1	1,8
SRC	26	46,4
Both	29	51,8
their democratic election by the		
Learners	31	56,4
Educators	0	0
Both	24	43,6

- A. The need to have both the SRC (presently referred to as RCL) system and the prefect system is popular (51,8% of the schools).
- B. Some of the schools in the sample, (46,4%) still prefer the RCL.
- C. The observation that educators on their own, have no powers to select the student leaders is encouraging.
- D. The educator's guidance in the selection of the student leaders is essential (43,6%).

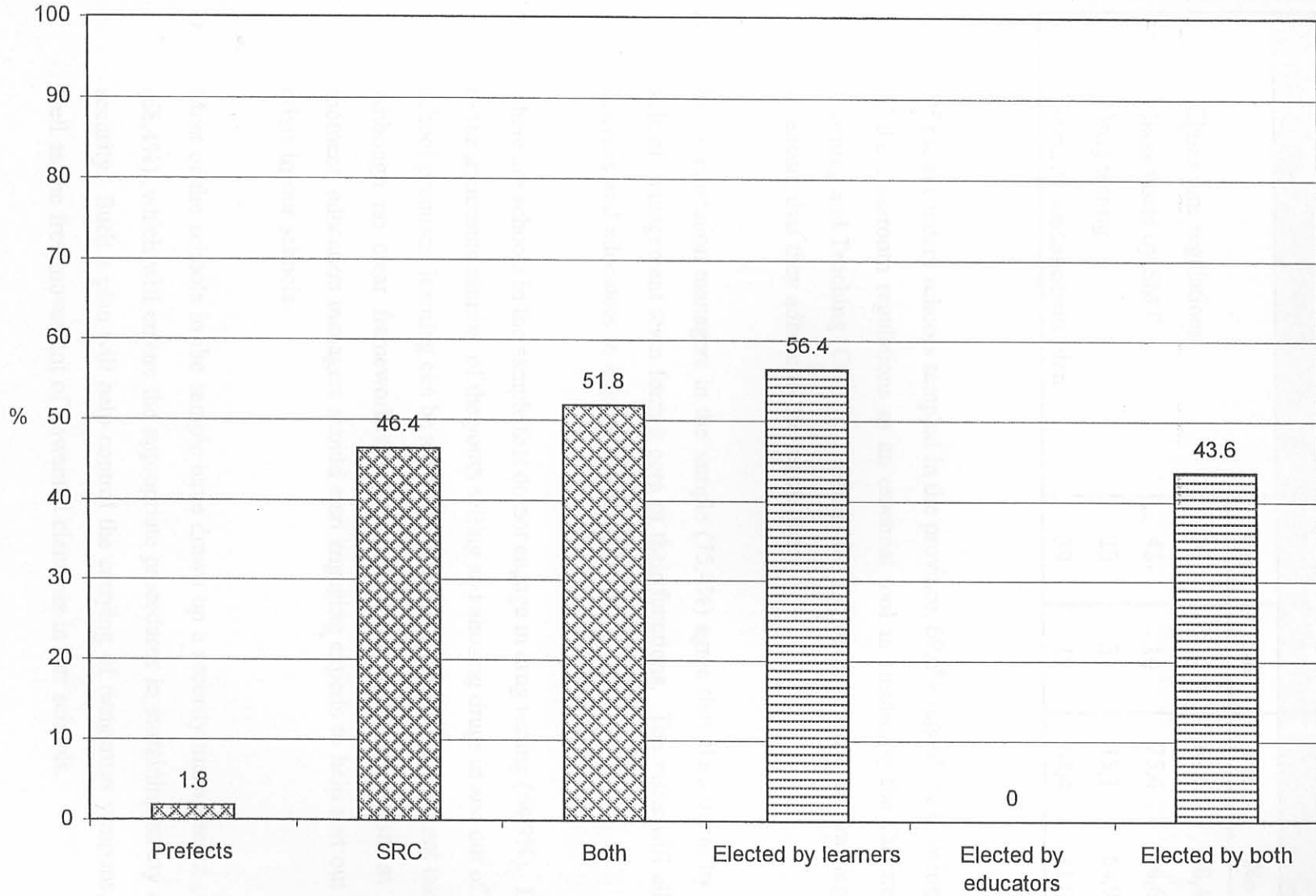


Diagram 5.4: Student leadership

Table 5.7: Classroom regulations, class visits, drug testing, security management plan

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Classroom regulations	39	17	69,6	30,4
Class visits by SMT	43	14	75,4	24,6
Drug testing	20	37	35,1	64,9
Security management plan	39	18	68,4	31,6

- A. Of the secondary schools sampled in the province, 69,6% regard the drawing up of the classroom regulations as an essential tool in sustaining the Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT). Learners have to be involved in its drawing up to ensure that they adhere to the regulations.
- B. Some education managers in the sample (75,4%) agree that class visits by the school management team form a core of their functions. The visits will allow learners and educators to engage in quality work.
- C. There are schools in the sample that do not engage in drug testing (64,9%). Due to the increasing number of the youth selling and abusing drugs in and out of the school premises, learning can be adversely affected if drastic steps are not taken. Although no clear framework from the education authorities exists at the moment, education managers should start engaging experts to help sort out the crisis in our schools.
- D. Most of the schools in the sample have drawn up a security management plan (68,4%), which will ensure the appropriate procedures in sustaining safety and security. Such a plan will help control the carrying of dangerous weapons, as well as the free movement of unwanted elements in our schools.

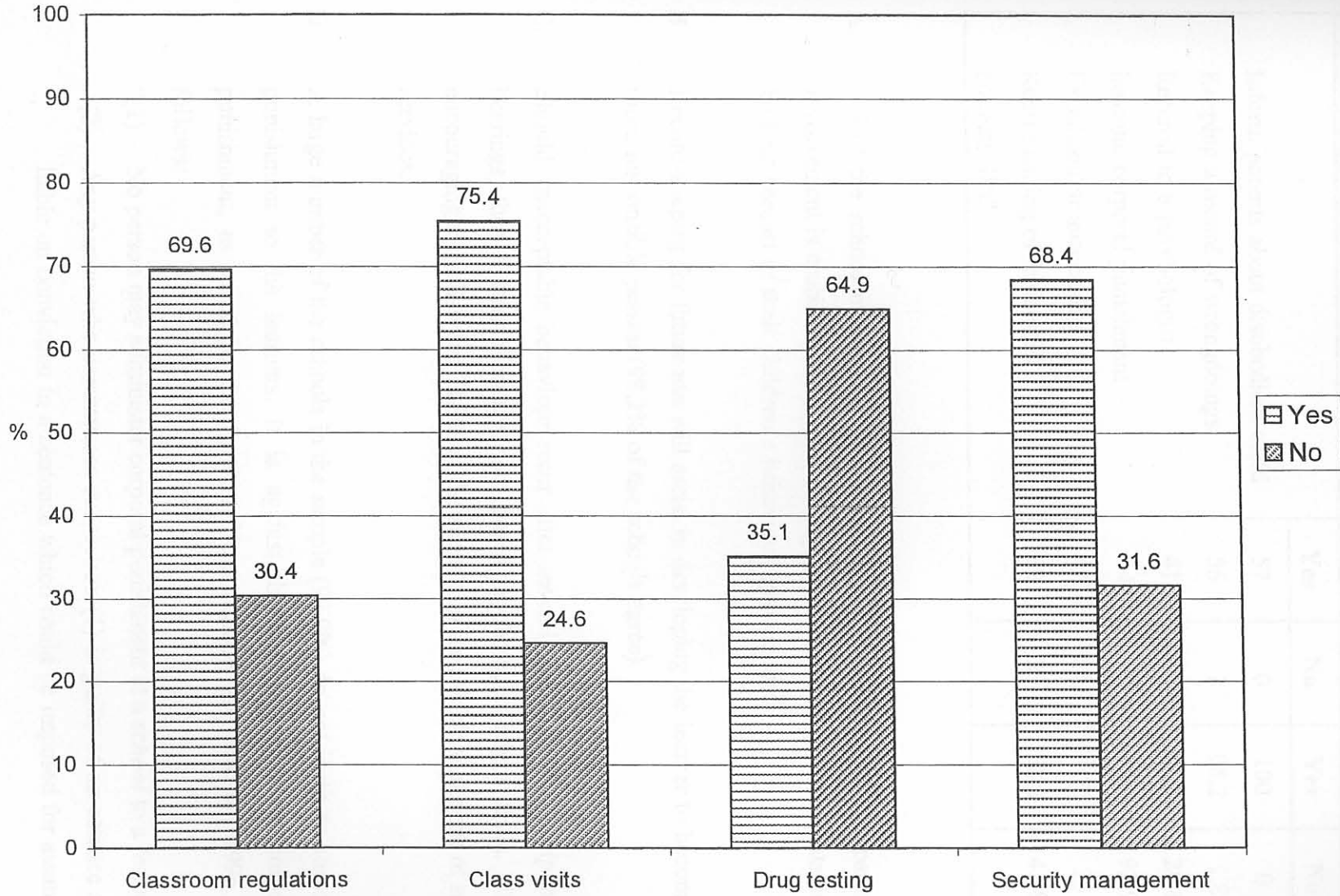


Diagram 5.5: Classroom and security management

Table 5.8: Disciplinary measures

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Inform parents about disobedient child	57	0	100	0
Keeping a record of wrongdoings	56	1	98,2	1,8
Referral to a psychologist	41	16	71,9	28,1
Institute corporal punishment	4	52	7,1	92,9
Expulsion or suspension	42	14	75	25
Reprimanding of learner by prefects/SRC	32	23	58,2	41,8

- A. All of the school managers in the sample concur with the fact that parental involvement is crucial in the school's development and progress. Parents must be kept abreast of their children's behaviour, good or bad.
- B. Record-keeping for future use will assist in developing the learner to become a more responsible person (98,2% of the schools agree).
- C. Should unacceptable behaviour recur after several warnings and disciplinary hearings, then a referral to a school based psychologist might assist. It is encouraging to realise that 71,9% of the schools in the sample make use of such services.
- D. A large number of the schools in the sample (92,9%) do not institute corporal punishment to the learners. It is against the law to administer corporal punishment, as stated by the South African Schools Act No. 84, 1996, as follows:
- “(1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a *school* to a *learner*.
 (2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.”

- E. Most of the schools in the sample (75%) agree that learners may be suspended only after several warnings as well as disciplinary hearings, with the parents' involvement.

The South African Schools Act, No. 84, 1996, says the following about suspension and expulsion from public schools:

- (1) "... the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing, suspend a learner from attending the school –
 - (a) as a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week;
or
 - (b) pending a decision as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school by the Head of Department;
- (2) subject to any applicable provincial law, a learner at a public school may be expelled only –
 - (a) by the Head of Department; and
 - (b) if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing.

- F. While the system of the RCL is enforceable in all the secondary schools, it is also interesting to learn that such a system can also be successfully utilised to bring about discipline in the schools (58,2% of the schools agree). However, concern can be raised that such measures do not interrupt the learning time of the student leaders, as well as create bad faith amongst them.

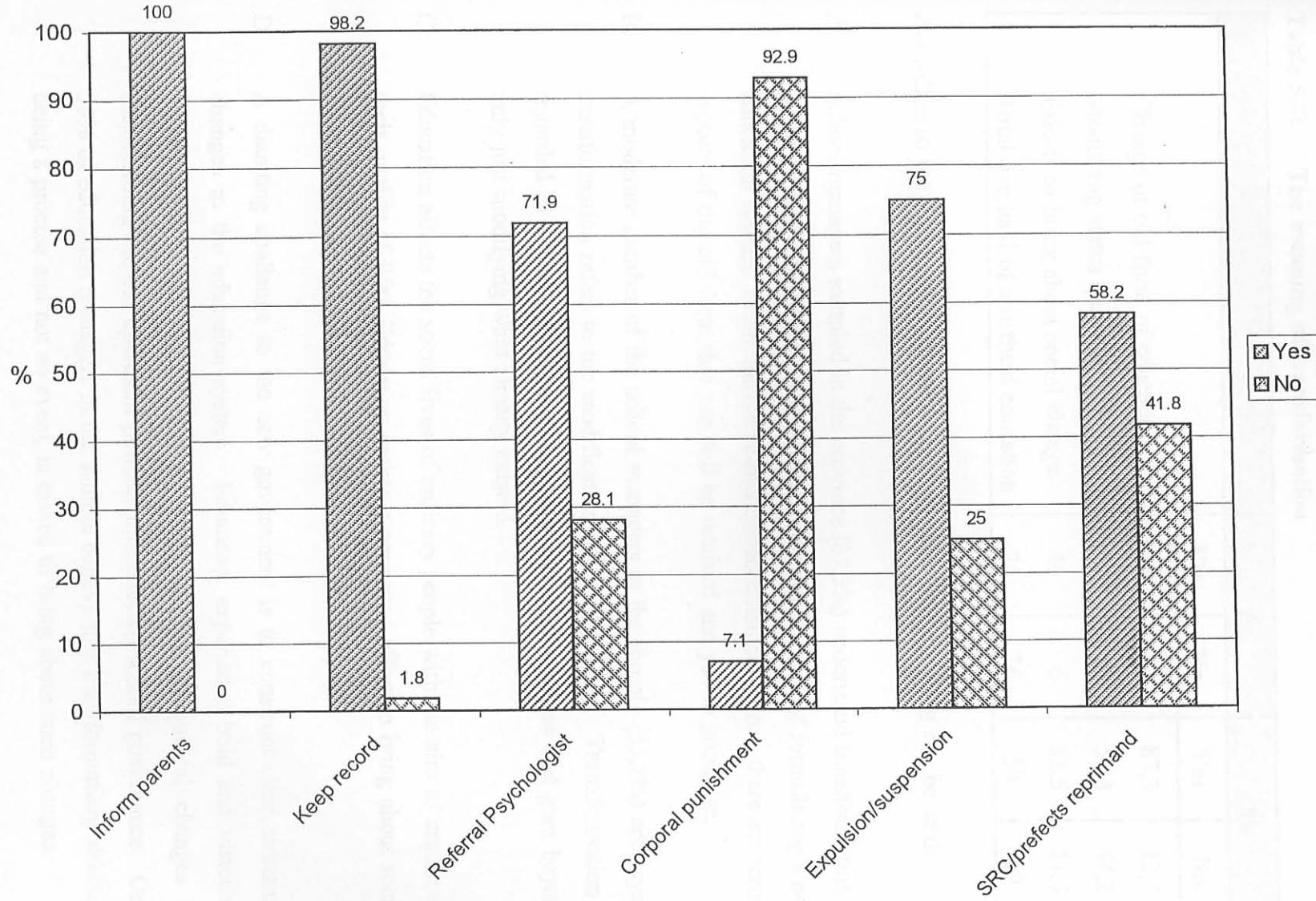


Diagram 5.6: Discipline

SECTION C. TRANSFORMATION

Table 5.9: The meaning of transformation

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Change of old form of education	48	7	87,3	12,7
Modifying status quo	29	23	55,8	44,2
Efforts to bring about social change	46	6	88,5	11,5
Total overhaul of apartheid education	26	26	50	50

According to the information contained in Table 5.9, the following can be said:

- A. School managers sampled in the province (87,3%) understand transformation to mean a change of the old form of education, with the aim of formulating a new education system. While the above-mentioned statement is true, there are certain aspects of the old form that can still be retained and put to good use.
- B. A moderate number of the school managers in the sample (55,8%) are saying transformation refers to the modification of the status quo. Transformation is regarded as a fundamental, deep-rooted restructuring process that goes beyond only just modifying what already existed.
- C. Education affects the social lives of ordinary people with the aim of improving their quality of life. Education makes a concerted effort to bring about social change, for which 88,5% of education managers agree.
- D. A daunting challenge to the new government is to construct clear structural changes in the education system. Educators experience bold and visionary changes to their mindsets in order to implement the radical changes by transforming the old apartheid policies that affected school governance. Only 50% of education managers in the sample believe that transformation, although being a process and not an event, is tasked to bring about such changes.

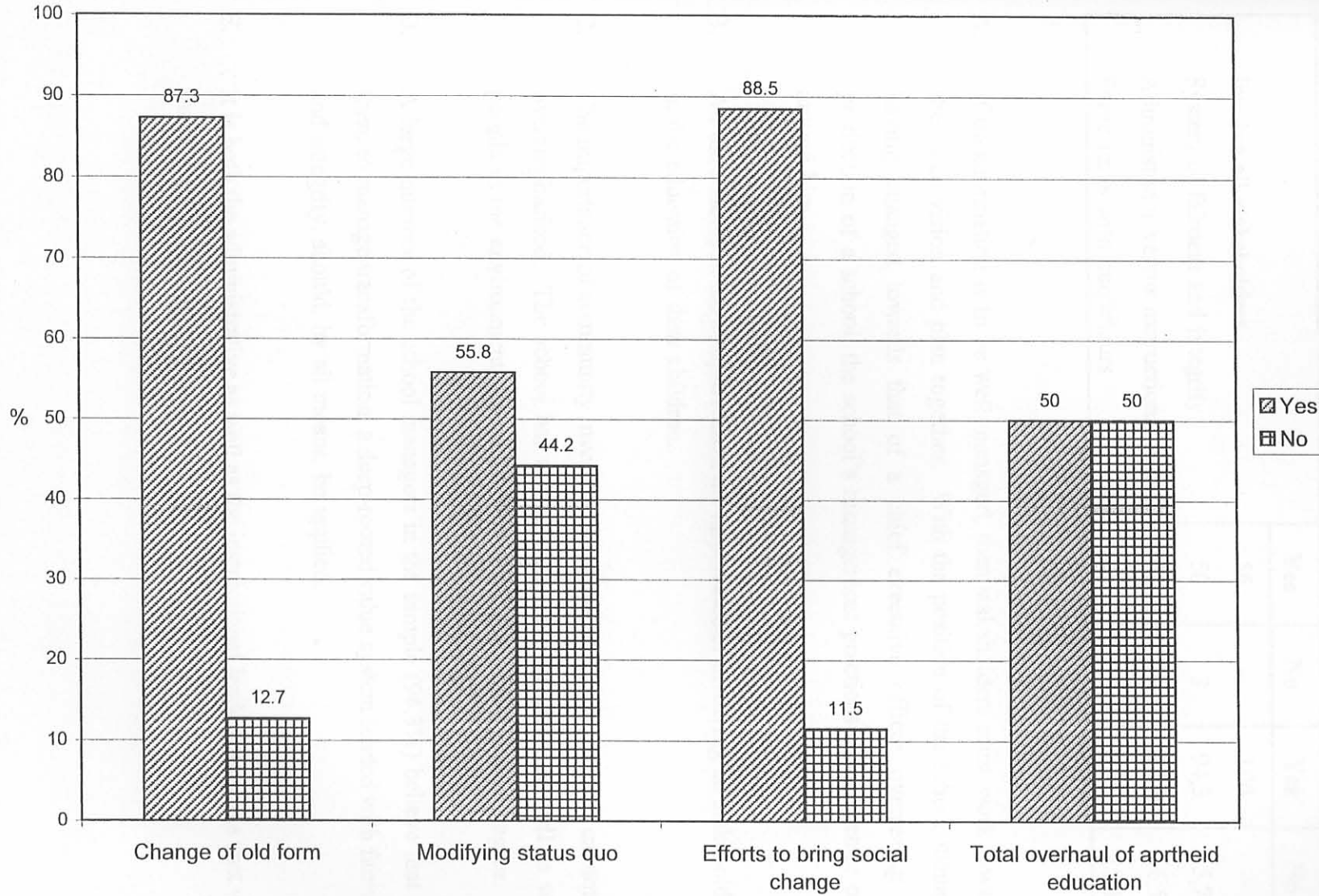


Diagram 5.7: The meaning of transformation

Table 5.10: The management of transformation

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Involve all stakeholders	56	–	100	–
System of fairness and integrity	50	3	94,3	5,7
Administrator versus instructional leader	33	19	63,5	36,5
Forge links with neighbours	45	8	84,9	15,1

- A. If transformation is to be well-managed, then stakeholders must work towards the same vision and plan together. With the position of the school manager having changed towards that of a chief executive officer overseeing the production of a school, the school's management practices do not centre only around him.
- B. All the schools in the sample realize the importance of involving all stakeholders in the education of their children.
- C. The importance of community involvement by the education manager cannot be overemphasised. The school has to link with other agencies, as well as with people in the environment, for which 84,9% of the school managers agree.
- D. A large number of the school managers in the sample (94,3%) believe that for them to manage transformation, a deep-rooted value system loaded with fairness and integrity, should, by all means, be applied.
- E. It is both the administrative as well as the instructional leadership skills that will make the school a better place to be.

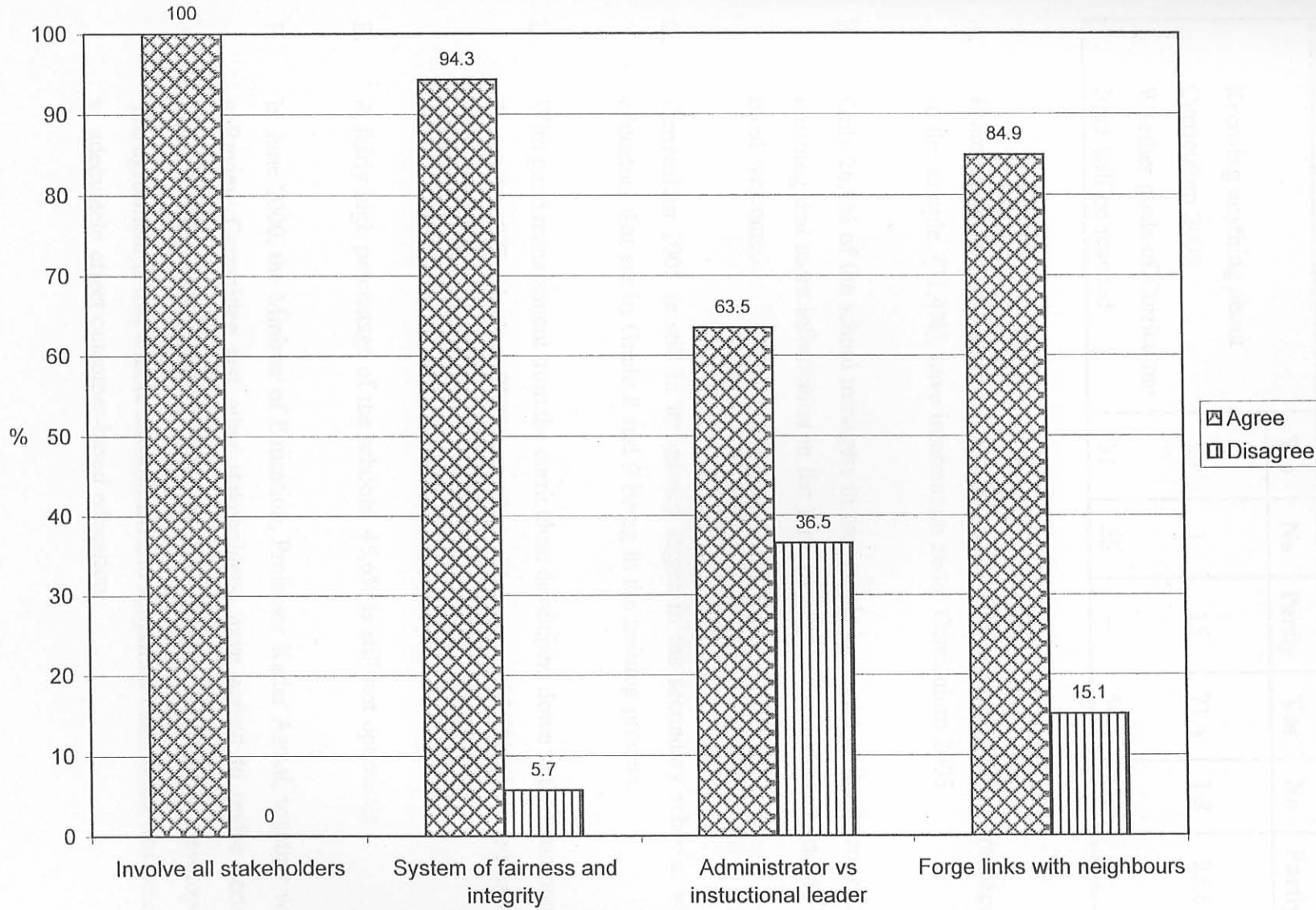


Diagram 5.8: The management of transformation

Table 5.11: Curriculum 2005

	f			%		
	Yes	No	Partly	Yes	No	Partly
Knowing anything about Curriculum 2005	40	1	15	71,4	1,8	26,8
Whether goals of Curriculum 2005 will be reached	31	26	–	54,4	45,6	–

- A. From the information gathered, a significantly high number of school managers in the sample, (71,4%), have information about Curriculum 2005.
- B. Only 26,8% of the school managers in the sample have part of the information, meaning that more information in the form of circulars and workshops will be most welcomed.
- C. Curriculum 2005 is still in its infancy stages in the secondary schools, with educators that are in Grade 8 and 9 being in the training process.
- D. With good management from the curriculum developers down to the classrooms, the goals of Curriculum 2005 are achievable, agrees 54,4% of the education managers in the sample.
- E. A fairly high percentage of the schools, 45,6% is still not optimistic.
- F. In June 2000, the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, together with a Review Committee and other stakeholders, have agreed to revise certain aspects of Curriculum 2005. In its place, Curriculum 21 is being developed. The agreement is that a more streamlined and simplified curriculum was needed to adequately effect outcomes-based education.

Table 5.12: Curriculum 2005. How information about the curriculum has reached the education managers

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Media reporting	26	12	68,4	31,6
District meetings	36	11	76,6	23,4
Departmental circulars	42	7	85,7	14,3

- A. Even though the Department of education has arranged briefing sessions and made use of circulars to disseminate information about Curriculum 2005, media reporting still played a major role, for which 68,4% of the people agree.
- B. It is encouraging to observe that 76,6% of the school managers in the sample have attended district meetings about Curriculum 2005.
- C. Departmental circulars have played a critical role in keeping the schools informed.

Table 5.13: Feasibility of training of educators for Curriculum 2005

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feasibility of training of the educators	23	13	64,3	35,7

Diagram 5.9: Information on Curriculum 2005

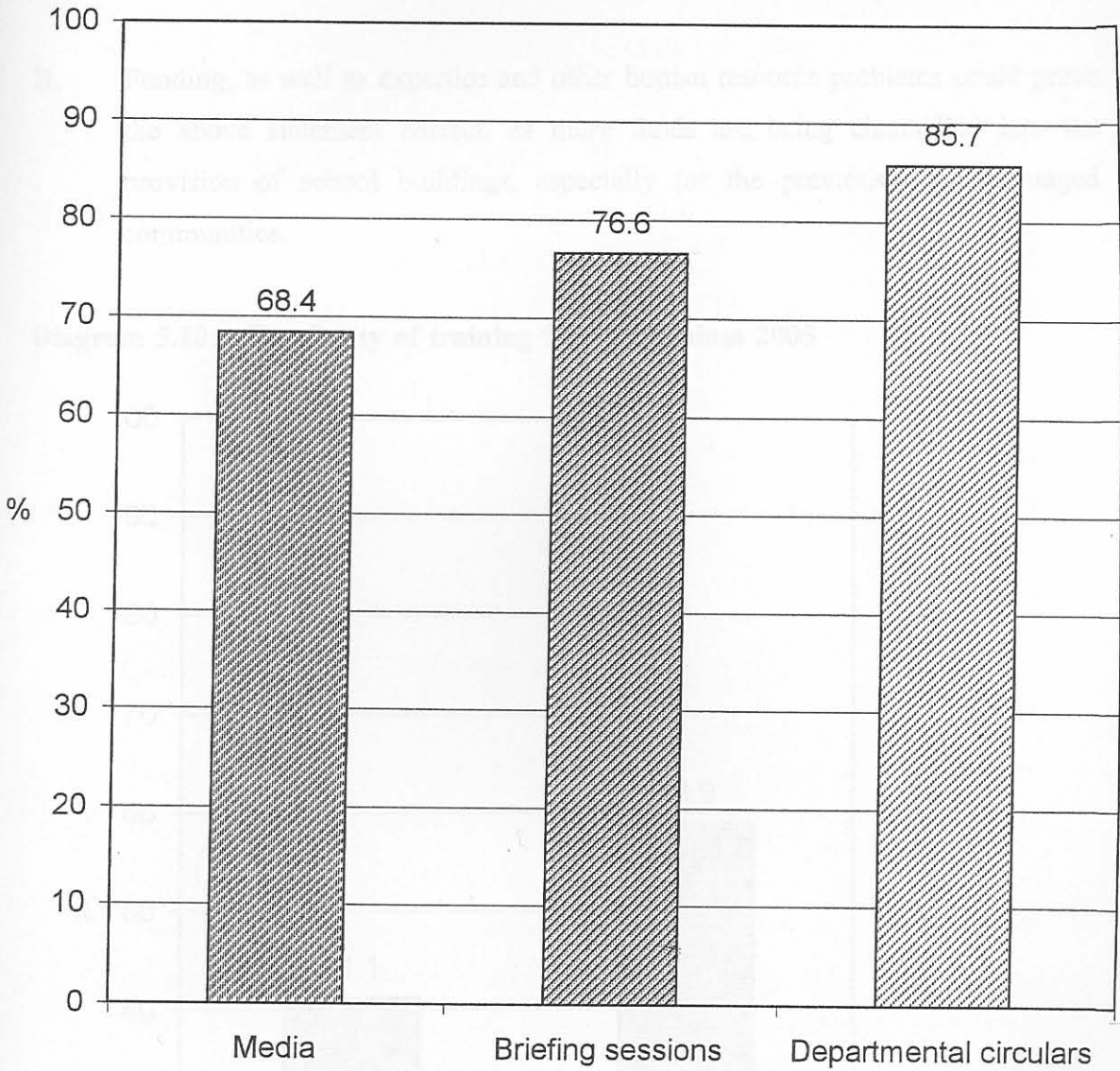


Table 5.13: Feasibility of training of educators for Curriculum 2005

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feasibility of training of the educators	23	33	41,1	58,9

- A. A fair number of the education managers in the sample (58,9%) believe that it is not feasible to train all the educators on the curriculum changes.
- B. Funding, as well as expertise and other human resource problems could prove the above statement correct, as more funds are being channelled into the provision of school buildings, especially for the previously disadvantaged communities.

Diagram 5.10: Feasibility of training for Curriculum 2005

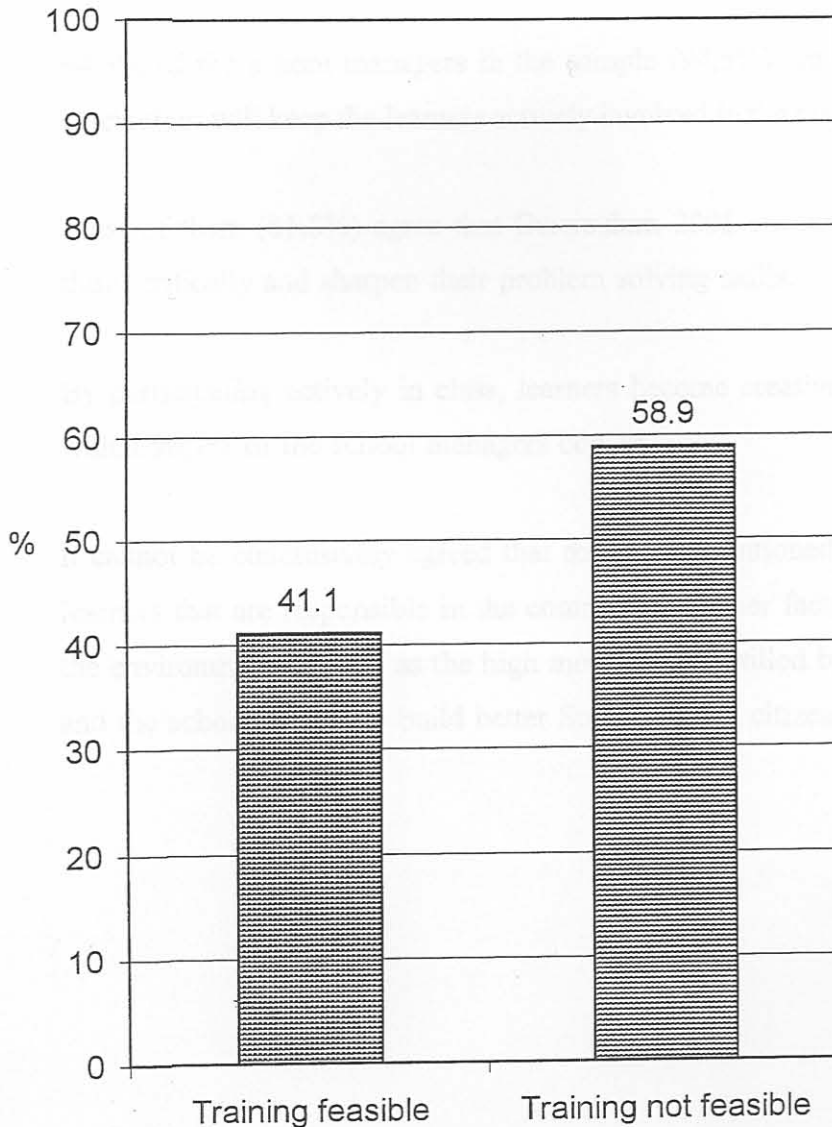


Table 5.14: The impact of Curriculum 2005 on the learners

	f		%	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Active learner participation	52	3	94,5	5,5
Encourage critical thinking and problem solving	45	10	81,8	18,2
Instil creativity and innovativeness	49	5	90,7	9,3
Make them responsible citizens	41	13	75,9	24,1

- A. 94,5% of the school managers in the sample (94,5%) are saying that the new curriculum will keep the learners actively involved in the classroom proceedings.
- B. Most of them (81,8%) agree that Curriculum 2005 encourages the learners to think critically and sharpen their problem solving skills.
- C. By participating actively in class, learners become creative and innovative, to which 90,7% of the school managers concur.
- D. It cannot be conclusively agreed that the above-mentioned factors will lead to learners that are responsible in the community. Other factors, like upbringing, the environment, as well as the high moral fibre instilled by the family, church and the school, will help build better South African citizens.